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Topsfield Historical Society

Local Lore Newsletter

Collection

Local Lore

Issue 40

1/07

The Topsfield Historical Society Newslettèr

WEB Address (<http://www.topsfieldhistory.org>) Email: webmaster@topsfieldhistory.org

P.O. Box 323, Topsfield, Massachusetts 01983



Confederacy Vice President Visits Topsfield

On May 11th, 1865 following the end of the Civil War, the Confederacy Vice President Alexander Hamilton Stephens (1812-1883) was arrested and imprisoned at Fort Warren in Boston Harbor for five months. Upon his release in October, 1865 he came to Topsfield unannounced as the guest of the late Jack Peirce's grandfather, Andrew Peirce.

The story in back of this little known visit really begins in 1807 when, at the age of 16, Andrew Peirce shipped out on one of his father's ships; his father having formed a shipping company in Gloucester and then having moved it to Dover, New Hampshire. Andrew's trip took him to Texas where he was impressed with the possibilities of this untouched frontier. He began laying the groundwork for his later contributions to its development. In 1856, he moved the shipping business to Boston because ships were getting too large for the Piscataqua River. In that same year he moved to Topsfield buying Witch Hill because from there he could get into town on one change of horses!

It must have been during this time period that he met Alexandra Hamilton Stephens. Stephens was born in Crawfordsville, Georgia and was orphaned as a child. He attended Franklin College and became active

in politics. He was by nature a civilian and by learning a jurist. He was a leader in the moderate factor of the Confederacy. When war loomed he was elected Confederacy vice president and later, upon his release from prison, Georgians reelected him to the US Senate; however the Republicans refused to recognize the new state government and he was not allowed his seat.

The war had a major impact upon Andrew's basically North-South shipping business and came close to bankrupting him. At its close, however, he scraped together enough money to but a bankrupt Texas railroad and began laying tracks westward into the sunset. He named his company the Sunset Route, a name later taken over by the Southern Pacific Railroad.

In the year 1882 Stephens was elected Governor of Georgia and during his term was taken sick and died on March 4, 1883. His memory is cherished as one of the great men of his times.

We are indebted to the late Jack Peirce for the information in this story.

See If It's True....

If a statue in the park of a person on a horse has both front legs in the air, the person died in battle. If the horse has one front leg in the air the person died as a result of wounds received in battle. If the horse has all four legs on the ground, the person died of natural causes.

Upcoming Events

Dr. Anthony Patton
February 11th, 3 PM

**Happy
Valentine's
Day!**

Kid's Corner

Many years ago in Scotland, a new game was invented. It was ruled "Gentlemen Only...Ladies Forbidden"...and thus the word GOLF entered into the English language.

Coca-Cola was originally green.

The first novel ever written on a typewriter was *Tom Sawyer*.

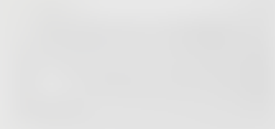
The San Francisco Cable cars are the only mobile National Monuments.

Each king in a deck of playing cards represents a great king from history:
Spades - King David
Hearts - Charlemagne
Clubs - Alexander, the Great
Diamonds - Julius Caesar

It was the accepted practice in Babylon 4,000 years ago that for a month after the wedding, the bride's father would supply his son-in-law with all the mead he could drink. Mead is a honey beer and because their calendar was lunar based, this period was called the honey month, now known as the honeymoon.

Contributors
Norm Isler/Anne Barrett

Editor/Designer
Anne Barrett



5. The fifth part of the document discusses the need for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the system. The system should be regularly reviewed to ensure that it is still meeting its objectives and that it is able to adapt to any changes in the environment. This should be done in a systematic and regular manner.

7. The seventh part of the document discusses the need for ongoing communication and consultation with all relevant parties. This is essential for ensuring that the system is able to meet the needs of all participants and for ensuring that any issues are resolved in a timely and effective manner. Communication should be maintained at all times and should be a key principle of the system.

9. The ninth part of the document discusses the need for ongoing training and development of all participants. This is essential for ensuring that all participants are able to perform their roles effectively and for ensuring that the system is able to adapt to any changes in the environment. Training and development should be maintained at all times and should be a key principle of the system.

11. The eleventh part of the document discusses the need for ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the system. The system should be regularly reviewed to ensure that it is still meeting its objectives and that it is able to adapt to any changes in the environment. This should be done in a systematic and regular manner.

13. The thirteenth part of the document discusses the need for ongoing communication and consultation with all relevant parties. This is essential for ensuring that the system is able to meet the needs of all participants and for ensuring that any issues are resolved in a timely and effective manner. Communication should be maintained at all times and should be a key principle of the system.

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Aviation History in Massachusetts

Did you know where and when the first airplane flew in Massachusetts and who flew it?

It was on February 28, 1910 when Augustus M. Herring took off from the frozen surface of Lake Chebacco on the Hamilton Essex line in a pusher biplane designed and built by him and W. Starling Burgess. It was their first design. Earlier, Herring had been involved with Octave Chanute (considered to be the father of US aviation) in glider tests at Indiana Dunes located at the southern end of Lake Michigan. Burgess was a successful Marblehead yacht designer who became interested in human flight. He formed a company in 1910 and, between then and 1918, built almost 100 planes, many of them seaplanes with the US Navy being one of his major customers.

After that first flight Burgess sold the airplane and moved his operation to Plum Island about a mile south of the present entrance to the Parker River Wildlife Sanctuary where he built a building and a wooden runway. One of his most successful designs was the Burgess-Dunne, the world's first flying wing designed to operate from both land and water. Both the US Navy and the Canadian military purchased this model.

His workmanship so impressed Wilbur and Orville Wright that they licensed him to build their Wright Model B airplane. After leaving the Burgess

Company he returned to yacht building and, in the 1930's designed and built 3 different America's Cup winners.

Host for the Chebacco Lake flight was Norman Prince, son of a wealthy New Hampshire family who later formed the famed Lafayette Escadrille, the corps of American flyers who fought for France before the US entered World War I. He later died coming back from a mission.

If you are interested early aviation history in New England visit the museum at the Plum Island airstrip.

Origin of Knots (Speed)

In the days of sailing ships finding your location was a major navigational problem for hundreds of years, particularly finding one's longitude. Until accurate chronometers were invented a common method of estimating distance traveled was by means of a so called chip log. This was a relatively immobile floating object attached by line to a reel. A sailor at the stern of the vessel would cast the log overboard and time the passage of knots placed along the line by means of an hourglass. This gave an indication of speed (in knots!) and, knowing how long the ship had been sailing, allowed an estimate of distance traveled to be made. This technique of dead reckoning of course did not take into account any ocean current effects. As it turned out, one knot was nearly equivalent to one nautical mile per hour, a nautical mile being one minute of latitude. Nautical miles are in common use today by ships and planes but the chip log, as you may have guessed, has been replaced by GPS systems.

Upcoming Events

Annual Meeting

March 11, 3 PM

Adventure in the Himalayas

April 13, 7:30 PM

Kid's Corner

It is known that St. Patrick was born in Britain to wealthy parents near the end of the fourth century. He is believed to have died on March 17, around 460 A.D. At the age of sixteen, Patrick was taken prisoner by a group of Irish raiders. They transported him to Ireland where he spent six years in captivity. During this time, he worked as a shepherd, outdoors and away from people. Lonely and afraid, he turned to his religion for solace, becoming a devout Christian. After more than six years as a prisoner, Patrick escaped to Britain. According to his writing, a voice-which he believed to be God's-spoke to him in a dream, telling him it was time to leave Ireland.

Patrick said he experienced a second revelation-an angel in a dream told him to return to Ireland as a missionary. Soon after, Patrick began religious training which lasted more than fifteen years. After his ordination he was sent to Ireland with a dual mission-to minister to Christians already living in Ireland and to begin to convert the Irish.

Patrick incorporated traditional Irish ritual into his lessons of Christianity. For instance, he used bonfires to celebrate Easter since the Irish were used to honoring their gods with fire. He also superimposed a sun, a powerful Irish symbol, onto the Christian cross to create what is now called a Celtic cross, so that veneration of the symbol would seem more natural to the Irish.

Contributors

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Purpose of this paper is to provide background information to the membership for discussion and direction at the March 11th, 2007 Annual Meeting

TOPSFIELD'S EAST SCHOOL HOUSE

This one room school house built in 1847 has been graciously donated by Robin Long and Paul Ackerman, the previous owners, to the Topsfield Historical Society for eventual restoration. Its restoration fits within the Society's Bylaws which state as one of their purposes: "(b) to preserve and maintain the Parson Capen House, the Captain Joseph Gould Barn *and any other historic structures that may be acquired by the Society.*"

Topsfield's first school house was built on Hill Street before 1740 although schooling had begun around 1694 per town records. The first surviving record of the School Committee was for the year ending March, 1839 and it shows the town maintained four schools; North, South (south of the river), East and Middle. By the late 1840's all of these buildings were in need of replacement and four new houses were built, of which only the East School house remains as it was; the others having either disappeared or one- the North School on Camp Meeting Road- having been converted to housing. The East School House has stood basically unused for the last 100 years and is in too poor condition to be moved but is considered restorable by Aaron Sturgis of Preservation Timber framing who recently inspected it.

The Society has a long range plan which includes several projects such as: creation of a display area in the second floor of the Capen House and construction of an annex in back of the Capen House as a place for a live in custodian as a security measure. Because of these plans plus the on going Records Room Renovation, a significant amount of immediate effort on the school house is not felt by all the directors to be a high priority project; particularly since no clear purpose or location for the house has been defined at this time, nor has a total cost to complete been determined; however several other communities have restored their one room school houses for use as museums or meeting places so those are possible uses for the East School House.

The Society directors voted at a recent meeting to proceed with stabilization of the house estimated to cost about \$1500.00 with that cost already funded through the generosity of a concerned member who realized that once the house is gone it cannot be recovered. A basic question facing the Society at this time is whether to proceed with the stabilization effort already funded via the donation, or to apply it towards an estimated \$20,000 to carefully disassemble, document and store the useable material in the basement of the Gould barn for eventual restoration, particularly the architecturally important pieces. The additional funding could come from three potential sources; 1 grants, 2 donations or 3 the Society's funds. Another question is when to proceed with whatever approach is selected.

Please come prepared to participate in this important meeting!

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY

RESEARCH REPORT

ON THE KINETICS OF THE REACTION OF

HYDROGEN PEROXIDE WITH

VARIOUS SUBSTANCES

BY

DR. J. H. HARRIS

Local Lore

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3/07



Kids Express Gratitude

Frequently the Society plays host to school groups that tour the Parson Capen House and learn about life "back then". Here are excerpts from letters received from the children.....

.....I learned that people that lived in the house slept in blankets filled with hay and under it was a pattern of ropes. Also I learned that they made apple cider in a hand made machine. Also I learned that the glass in the windows is from England. Also I learned that they only had about six knives because they were very expensive. Also I learned kids can't talk at dinner! I would not be able to last a minute! They also used a oven that is metal, to put meat in it and open the back of it and let heat in. -*Hannah Brown*

.....My favorite part of the house was the lap top desk it was a great technology from a long time ago. I also thought the candlestick that moved up and down to give off more light was another good example of technology. Also, I thought the herb garden was beautiful. My favorite plant was the lemon balm, it smelled very lemony. Also, the pumpkin was a very big surprise! It was huge! The kitchen table was enormous! I also tried the wool that you rub and it was pretty tiring after while. I could never imagine sleeping in those old fashioned beds, they looked pretty uncomfortable. -*Lindsey Jordan*

Thanks to Joyce Bergsten for these gems!

Contributors

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Anne Barrett

Stanley Steamers and Topsfield

Francis Edgar Stanley along with his brother Matthew was the inventor of the famous Stanley Steamer automobile. The family had long ties to Topsfield with the first Stanley arriving here about 1659. In 1778 the family moved to Attleboro, then Winthrop, Maine and later to Kingfield, Maine where a museum is now located featuring their unique automobile.

On July 31, 1918 a tragic accident occurred on the Newburyport Turnpike in Topsfield which took the life of Francis Edgar Stanley. According to newspaper accounts he was heading south- the location is not completely clear in the accounts- when he came over a rise in the road and swerved sharply to avoid an obstacle. He left the road, hit a woodpile and his steamer overturned. He died enroute to Beverly Hospital. According to a late Society member, George Tilton told the member he was working in his barn near 490 Boston Street when he heard the crash. Running outside he saw the wreckage so the location had to be very close to #490. The barn still exists (barely).

Francis Edgar had other accomplishments besides his inventiveness. He was a remarkable conversationalist and a most lucid and convincing writer of the times. He was a student of economics and possessed a clear concept of philosophy and science. He was profoundly honest and well regarded by his associates. For further information about this remarkable individual and his automobile, visit the museum in Kingfield, Maine. (phone 207-265-2729)

**Please send in your membership
renewal as soon as possible!
Thank You !!!**

Upcoming Events

**People, Culture &
Mountains of Nepal**
April 13, 7:30 PM

Kid's Corner



On June 14, 1777, Congress adopted a resolution calling for a flag with thirteen stripes, alternating red and white, with a blue canton or "union", with thirteen white stars. The resolution defined the significance of the colors: "White signifies Purity and Innocence; Red, Hardiness and Valor; Blue, Vigilance, Perseverance and Justice."

Until 1818, a star and stripe were added as each new state was admitted to the Union. By 1816 it was evident that the practice was not practical, and on April 4, 1816, it was made official that the Flag of the United States would have thirteen red and white stripes and a blue canton on which a white star would be added for each state on the July 4th following the admission of the new state.

Our country's flag is said to have been named Old Glory by William Driver, a Salem sea captain. One legend has it that in 1824 when he was 21 his mother presented him with a homemade flag that he used on his brig; when he raised it he said "I name thee Old Glory".

Throughout the 19th century, the star arrangements varied; the flag was very popular, creating a sense of unity among the states, so the variations in its appearance were deemed unimportant. In 1912, however, the government specified the official pattern, proportions and colors we know today.

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Issue 43

4/07



Annual Meeting – March 11, 2007

At the 113th annual meeting of the Society the members heard the Treasurer's report, previewed the coming year's programs, reviewed accomplishments, challenges and plans (below), held elections and discussed the future of the one room East School House. The majority of comments expressed concerning the school house were in favor of disassembly and storage of the salvageable parts until such time as a suitable location for its rebuilding could be found consistent with other priorities.

Accomplishments

Programs- many, varied and interesting; good feedback on the newsletter as well

New Members- over 100, now at 504 total individuals in 14 states

Winning Four Essex National Heritage Awards:

- *Gould Barn Restoration
- *Capen House Renovation
- *Town Hall Clock Repairs
- *Joseph Smith Markers

Professional Archivist Review

Disaster Plan Created

39th Annual Strawberry Festival

\$15K in Kimball Scholarship Awards

Accomplishments (continued)

Records Room Upgrade:
*Ceiling & Insulation Added
*Temp & Humidity Recorder
*Research Policy Defined

Stone Wall repaired

Web Site being updated

1847 School House acquired

Challenges

Lack of volunteer participation

Plans

Complete records room upgrade

Promote the society as an active vibrant part of the community

Continue historic marker program

Continue the effort towards better preservation/access to historical records

Begin acquisition of artifacts as defined in Joseph Gould's probate list

Begin renovation of Capen House second floor former kitchen/bath

Upcoming Events

Pied Potter Hamelin

May 4, 7:30 PM

Strawberry Festival

June 9, 10 - 4

Kid's Corner



The 1896 Olympic Marathon distance of 24.8

miles was based on the distance run, according to famous Greek legend, in which the Greek foot-soldier Pheidippides was sent from the plains of Marathon to Athens with the news of the astounding victory over a superior Persian army. Exhausted as he approached the leaders of the City of Athens, he staggered, gasped, "Rejoice! We Conquer!" and then collapsed.

On April 19, 1897, John J. McDermott of New York, emerged from a 15-member starting field and captured the first Boston Marathon in 2:55:10.

The marathon distance was later changed as a result of the 1908 Olympic Games in London. That year, King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra wanted the marathon race to begin at Windsor Castle outside the city so that the Royal family could view the start. The distance between the castle and the Olympic Stadium in London proved to be 26 miles. Organizers added extra yards to the finish around a track, 385 to be exact, so the runners would finish in front of the king and queen's royal box. Every Olympic marathon run since the 1908 Games has been a distance of 26 miles, 385 yards.

From www.bostonmarathon.org

**Please send in your
membership renewal as
soon as possible!
Thank You !!!**

Contributors Editor/Designer
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Issue 44

5/07



Governor General Thomas Gage's Local Connections

December 16th, 1773 was the day of the Boston tea party and on January 20th Topsfield residents had voted not to buy or sell any tea that "has or may be exported from Great Britain" approving every legal method the town of Boston and others had taken to prevent said company's tea from being landed. Any merchants continuing to import tea from Great Britain were to be considered "enemies to all the American Colonies". This was very strong wording. Massachusetts was punished for this transgression in the spring by King George III who had Parliament pass a series of acts (called the Coercive Acts) which, among other things, closed the port of Boston to all trade except military stores and food and fuel. The closing was to continue until restitution was made to the British East India Company for the lost tea. These acts greatly increased the feeling of distrust by the Colonists and led to the April 19, 1775 Battle of Lexington.

Against this background Military Governor General Gage arrived on May 17, 1774 to enforce the acts. He replaced Civilian Governor Thomas Hutchison as head of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. He had been Commander in Chief of British Forces in North America during the French and Indian War. He was married to an American, was apparently well liked and reportedly considered the Boston port Bill to be illegal. He was escorted into Salem where a ball was held at the home of Col William Browne (located in Derby Square near where the old town hall now stands) in honor of King George's birthday. Browne was a

Loyalist whose property was later confiscated by the Massachusetts Legislature.

In June Gage moved the capital from radical Boston to more conservative Salem. During the summer he and his family lived at the "Lindens", and used this home of Robert "King" Hooper as his headquarters. If you have ever eaten at the Century House Restaurant on Route 114 in Peabody you have been at this location. In July two companies of the 64th Staffordshire Regiment took up camp opposite the Linden mansion to guard the governor. They must have been located where Friendly's Restaurant is today.

Gage was apparently a recreation sailor, as he is reported to have enjoyed sailing on Wenham Lake.

Sources for this material: Topsfield town records and the Salem Library archives.

**Please send in your
membership renewal as
soon as possible!**

Your membership support in the form of dues and participation is an integral part of the continued success of the Society. Where would we be without our members? If you haven't already, please renew your membership today!

Thank You !!!

Contributors Editor/Designer
Norm Isler/Anne Barrett Anne Barrett

Upcoming Events

Strawberry Festival

June 9, 10 - 4

Priscilla Capen Herb Society Tea

June 27 & July 25, 2 - 4 PM
Doll Tea - August 29, 2 - 4 PM

Kid's Corner...

...Summer vacation is almost here!

Why does the American school year start in September and end in June? It's something of a mystery. Did children once "bring in the harvest" on the family farm all summer in the rural past?

Historians at Old Sturbridge Village say not. According to the web site, farm children went to school from December to March and from mid-May to August. Adults and children helped with planting and harvesting in the spring and fall.

Urban schools in the 1800s also lacked the long summer vacation modern Americans take for granted. Like working families today, new immigrant families needed a safe and affordable place for children to stay while parents worked. In large cities, children of parents who worked in factories, shops, or mills learned English and other subjects during an 11-month school year.

Short school years with long vacations are not the norm in Europe, Asia, or South America either. Children in most industrialized countries go to school more days per year and more hours per day than in America.

From www.infoplease.com

1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a general discussion of the problem. It is shown that the problem is of great importance in the theory of differential equations.

2. In the second part, we consider the case of a linear differential equation. It is shown that the problem is solvable in this case.

3. In the third part, we consider the case of a nonlinear differential equation. It is shown that the problem is solvable in this case.

4. In the fourth part, we consider the case of a system of differential equations. It is shown that the problem is solvable in this case.

5. In the fifth part, we consider the case of a partial differential equation. It is shown that the problem is solvable in this case.

6. In the sixth part, we consider the case of a boundary value problem. It is shown that the problem is solvable in this case.

7. In the seventh part, we consider the case of an initial value problem. It is shown that the problem is solvable in this case.

8. In the eighth part, we consider the case of a mixed boundary value problem. It is shown that the problem is solvable in this case.

9. In the ninth part, we consider the case of a problem with variable coefficients. It is shown that the problem is solvable in this case.

10. In the tenth part, we consider the case of a problem with discontinuous coefficients. It is shown that the problem is solvable in this case.

11. In the eleventh part, we consider the case of a problem with nonlocal conditions. It is shown that the problem is solvable in this case.

12. In the twelfth part, we consider the case of a problem with nonlocal boundary conditions. It is shown that the problem is solvable in this case.

13. In the thirteenth part, we consider the case of a problem with nonlocal initial conditions. It is shown that the problem is solvable in this case.

14. In the fourteenth part, we consider the case of a problem with nonlocal mixed boundary conditions. It is shown that the problem is solvable in this case.

15. In the fifteenth part, we consider the case of a problem with nonlocal partial differential equations. It is shown that the problem is solvable in this case.



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Issue 45

8/07



The Middlesex Canal

Back in 1793 some farsighted individuals secured a charter from the Commonwealth to construct a canal from Middlesex Village on the Merrimac River (near Lowell which did not yet exist) to the Charlestown Mill Pond near Boston. Roads were few and sometimes impassable so water offered an attractive alternative method of transportation. The plan for the canal is said to have originated with the Honorable James Sullivan who from the period 1790 to his death in 1808 was a sheriff, attorney-general, judge of the State Supreme Court and Governor of Massachusetts. Colonel Loammi Baldwin of Woburn was also a moving spirit in getting the canal underway and devoted much of his life to its construction and maintenance. His house may still be seen in Woburn facing one of the few remaining recognizable portions of the canal. (you cross the canal's path every time you travel on Route 128 through Woburn). Baldwin, by the way, discovered the apple later named for him in an open field in Wilmington, possibly while surveying the canal's intended route.

Incentive for the canal was two way trade- to facilitate the flow of manufactured goods to the interior, particularly New Hampshire, and to also facilitate the flow of goods such as lumber, granite and furs to Boston. Without such a canal much trade was proceeding on the Merrimac River to Newburyport, bypassing Boston.

In view of the many obstacles to construction it is a wonder that this 27 and 1/4-mile waterway was ever built. Few of the builders and none of the workmen had ever seen a canal. The workman did not understand the workings of the twenty locks, which had to be used to control the water level. They had no concept of how to carry a canal over a

Welcome New Members!

Kristine & Randall Hopson
Arthur L. Gould

Contributors

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Editor/Designer

Anne Barrett

river by means of a trough and some eight of these aqueducts had to be built in addition to fifty bridges. Neither workmen nor builders knew about cement since this operation was twenty years ahead of the cement industry in America. As a result a crew of laborers often worked from daybreak until sunset under subcontractors who often did not know exactly what they were doing

Surveying was also in its infancy. The original surveyor, Benjamin Thompson, had never seen or heard of a theodolite, an instrument necessary for accurate height measurements. After laborious calculation and much squinting along carpenter's levels he concluded that the ascent from the Concord River in Billerica to the Merrimac in Chelmsford was sixteen and one-half feet. Fortunately for the proprietors a Samuel Weston from England happened to be in the United States and was called in as a consultant. He found the sixteen and one-half foot ascent was actually a twenty-foot drop. This was very important, since it meant that water for the canal would have to come from the Concord River, not the Merrimac. It is interesting to note that no one would have thought of the canal had it not been for the Merrimac; yet not one drop of water from this river ever flowed through the canal.

On December 31, 1803 the canal was finally opened ten years after it was started. It had cost \$630,000 and was the longest canal in America. Prominent men of the time such as John Hancock, John Adams and John Quincy Adams were all stockholders. The early success of the Middlesex canal helped inspire the construction of other canals in the United States, particularly the Erie Canal. States such as New York sent official delegations to inspect the successful Middlesex. The Canal served as a school of practical experience for early engineers and is considered by many to be the birthplace of American Civil Engineering. Canal Visitor's Center, Billerica.

Upcoming Events

King Phillip's War

Eric Schultz

September 14, 7:30 PM

Gothic Victorian Tales by Candlelight

October 19, 7:30 PM

Congratulations to the 2007 Kimball Scholarship recipients:

Mark Conner
Alexandra Humpherys
Brendan Shepard
Sarah E. Moniz
Brian K. Dukehart
Craig Bunker
Julianne M. Smith
Jillian R. Cohen
Erin Baumgardner.

Additionally the Congregational Church received the second of three payments to document the post and beam technology used during the steeple reconstruction.

In August, 30 Historical Society member volunteers enjoyed a two hour sail in Boston harbor aboard the tall ship "Formidable" courtesy of the ship's owner Keating Willcox of Hamilton and the society as a "thank you" to our dedicated volunteers.

Kid's Corner: Home Aquariums

Well-to-do families of the early nineteenth century often purchased a solitary goldfish in a globe from big-city florists as parlor ornaments. The concept of the "balanced aquarium," where creatures from streams or ponds lived with plants in a miniature ecosystem, was introduced in the 1850s and became popular among amateur naturalists. Wealthy collectors imported tropical fish during the 1910s; by the late 1920s, pet stores sold them. petsinamerica.org

Project Title

Section 1: Introduction

Section 2: Methodology

Section 3: Results

Section 4: Discussion

Section 5: Conclusion

Section 6: Appendix A

Section 7: Appendix B

Section 8: Appendix C

Section 9: Appendix D

Section 10: Appendix E

Section 11: Appendix F

Section 12: Appendix G

Section 13: Appendix H

Section 14: Appendix I

Section 15: Appendix J

Section 16: Bibliography

Section 17: References

Section 18: Acknowledgments

Section 19: Glossary

Section 20: Index

Section 21: Appendix K

Section 22: Appendix L

Section 23: Appendix M

Section 24: Appendix N

Section 25: Appendix O

Section 26: Appendix P

Section 27: Appendix Q

Section 28: Appendix R

Section 29: Appendix S

Section 30: Appendix T

Local Lore

Issue 46 9/107

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Good Behaviour

The Editor has in her possession a book entitled "The Art of Good Behaviour", published in 1848. Local Lore will from time to time include tidbits from this very small but instructive piece of social literature.

Comical Advice to Young Gentlemen

Never exhort young ladies, during a quadrille, to "fake away" or "flare up", for they, being unacquainted with the meaning of such terms, will naturally conclude that it is an improper one.

Should it be necessary for you to speak of someone smoking tobacco, do not call that substance a weed, or the act of using it "blowing a cloud".

When an acquaintance pays you a visit, take care, in rising to receive him, not to appear to be washing your hands, and, should you be engaged in writing at the time, place your pen on the table, or in the inkstand, and not behind your ear.

When you have got a cold in the head and weak eyes, do not go and call on young ladies.

Do not eat gravy with a knife, for fear those about you should suppose you to be going to commit suicide.

Call all articles of dress by their proper names. What delight can be found by a thinking mind in designating a hat as a tile, trousers as kickseys, a neckerchief as a fogle, or a great coat as an upper Benjamin. And never speak of clothes, collectively, as toggs or toggery.

Contributors Norm Isler/Anne Barrett Editor/Designer Anne Barrett

Address of Welcome (Partial Excerpt)

Curtis Campbell, Chairman,
Tercentenary Committee, 1950

My fellow townspeople, and friends of Topsfield. We enter upon these exercises after long preparation, but yet with one minor deficiency. We do not have Parson Capen's pulpit actually before us.

After the publicity this matter has received through newspapers and radio, I may not need to tell you that Mr. Nehemiah Cleveland, in his anniversary address in Topsfield in 1850, charged that a certain precious memorial-very apparently the pulpit-standing before him at the time-be used again at the observances in 1950. The companion piece that this invaluable relic-which he also charge we use-is in fact here: Parson Capen's chair, from which he so often rose to preach during his 41 years of ministry beginning in 1684. But the pulpit has not been found.

I recommend that the search for it go on unceasingly. If the precious memorial be found, I recommend that it be used in all succeeding observances of the anniversary of the town. So long as it be missing, I recommend that the deficiency be overcome in the way I am about to adopt. I call upon you here present to be as cooperative as the great audiences of the London theaters in the seventeenth century when Topsfield's first settlers ventured up the Agawam River. Please view this object before me as if it were in fact Parson Capen's pulpit. If you will do so with all the strength of your imagination you may capture at least a large part of the great spiritual uplift which Nehemiah Cleveland so earnestly intended today's gathering.

Upcoming Events

Gothic Victorian Tales by Candlelight

October 19, 7:30 PM

Witches Roost Halloween Party

October 28, 2 - 3:30 PM

Kid's Corner



Brooms have long been connected with witchcraft, almost universally portrayed as medieval-style round brooms and associated with female witches. Despite the association with women, in 1453, the first known case of claiming to have flown on a broomstick is recorded, confessed by the male witch Guillaume Edelin. There are, however, prior records of witches flying on sticks or similar objects, usually that had been first greased with a magical flying ointment.

Brooms served another purpose during periods of persecution. Witches and other magic practitioners would disguise their wands as broom sticks to avoid suspicion. It is also a tradition that brooms have been used by some as receptacles to harbor temporarily a particular spirit.

Today the broom is included in lists of ritual tools in many pagan guide books, where it is often referred to as a besom. Representing the Element of Air, brooms are utilized in the purification of areas. They are used to sweep ritual circles clean of negative energy.

wikipedia.com



Local Lore

Issue 47 10/07

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WEB Address (<http://www.topsfieldhistory.org>) Email: webmaster@topsfieldhistory.org
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Willowdale Mill

Farming was the chief occupation of the early settlers and continued until the last 75-100 years. The rich lands near the Ipswich River tempted people from Ipswich and elsewhere to push westward into the "New Meadows", one of Topsfield's early names. The large tracts of land granted to prominent members of the Colony were gradually sold to men who built their houses on them and cultivated the land. As the years passed, sons of these pioneers grew up, married, and in many cases their fathers gave them part of the homestead on which they established their own homes. As the original farms decreased in acreage the population increased. The settlers were occupied in supplying themselves with food, shelter and clothing as they were almost entirely dependent on their own resources in this wilderness area.

Corn was one of the principal crops and its grinding became an important industry. At first the people of Topsfield had to carry their grain to a grist mill in Ipswich but the road was poor and they soon felt a need for their own mill. Francis Peabody was given the right in 1664 by Topsfield to set up a grist mill on Pye brook which flows into the Ipswich a few miles west of here. This mill remained in the Peabody family for 164 years until 1820 and, after it was sold, it remained in operation until 1892. The mill site can still be seen in Topsfield just west of the Route 1 and Ipswich Road intersection. Later the Howletts built a grist mill on Howletts brook just off Campmeeting Road. That brook crosses Ipswich Road about two miles west of here. These two mills served the town for many years. One of the Howlett millstones now serves

as a door step at the Society's Captain Joseph Gould Barn.

Manufacturing had not been attempted to any great extent; each town did have its own blacksmith. About 1834 a factory was built on the Hamilton side of the Ipswich River, in an area known as Willowdale, for the purpose of manufacturing woolen goods. It was a large stone structure accompanied by a large stone dwelling house for the workers. It was known as "Manning's Mills" from the name of the builder. In 1864 this factory manufactured 55,000 pairs of army and ribbed socks and other woolen goods such as blankets that were used by the Union Army in the Civil War. As time went on, a village of cottages, several stores and a school were built in the vicinity of the factory. The population of Hamilton in 1880 had increased by about 100 above the average for the previous century due to this factory. The factory was destroyed by fire on January 12, 1884 and was never rebuilt. There is also a trace of the four story dwelling house foundation uphill from the mill site nearby. Five of the cottages were sold and moved to Mill Street in South Hamilton. What basically remains today are the foundation stones of the factory and the sluiceway leading from the dam to the factory, a silent tribute to the early pioneers of this area. *From George Francis Dow's History of Topsfield, 1940 and Hurd's History of Essex County, 1888*

CONGRATULATIONS! Bill Whiting was presented with the Essex National Heritage Commission's Pioneer in Partnership award for his efforts in creating a common historical records base between the society and the Topsfield town library. The award, one of two given this year, recognizes the potential of this partnership concept. Good job Bill!

Upcoming Events

**The Life & Times of
Clarence Darrow by Richard Clark**
November 16, 7:30 PM

**Parson Capen House
Thanksgiving Day Open House**
Costumed Interpreters * Refreshments
November 22, 10 AM to 12 PM

Kid's Corner The First World Series



Prior to the 1903 season, the presidents of the American and National Leagues sat down and made an agreement for a post-season series between the champions of the American League and National League to settle the world championship. The Boston Pilgrims (as they were then named) earned a spot in that first World Series against the Pittsburgh Pirates.

The first World Series game was played at the Huntington Avenue Grounds, (Fenway Park didn't yet exist) and Cy Young delivered the first ever World Series Pitch. In a tense competition, it took eight games for the Pilgrims to become the very first World Series Champions over Pittsburgh.

Boston Globe owner General Charles Henry Taylor, a Civil War veteran, bought the team for his son John in 1904. That year the Pilgrims took home their second consecutive AL Pennant. However the manager of the National League champions, the New York Giants, refused to play against the Pilgrims, so there was no World Series that year.

Welcome New Members!

Robert J. Willis
Kathryn Jobe
Arthur & Jean Towne
Willowdale Estate

Contributors Editor/Designer
Norm Isler/Anne Barrett Anne Barrett

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Issue 48

11/07



Topsfield News Reported in the *Salem Gazette*

On Saturday, Oct. 14, Mr. Thomas Pierce, the proprietor of the old Crowninshield farm, entertained Stephens, late Vice President of the rebel Confederacy, and another individual, who have just been released from Fort Warren. They remained over the Sunday, and went away on Monday morning.

Oct. 20, 1865

A daring highway robbery took place on Monday evening, near Topsfield. At about six o'clock in the afternoon, Mr. Wentworth of the Salem and Topsfield express, being about two miles from the latter town, on his return from Salem, was attacked by two men, who stopped his horse and with a pistol presented at his head by one of them, demanded his money. Finding resistance hopeless, he gave up what he had, amounting to \$260, and was permitted to proceed. A man was arrested yesterday on suspicion of being one of the robbers, but his guilt is believed to be at least doubtful.

Nov. 10, 1865

A festival was held last evening, at our Union hall, under auspices of "The Young Ladies' Society", for the laudable purpose of inaugurating a Lyceum course of lectures. The Hall was tastefully decorated with emblems and devices, the tables provoked the connoisseur and epicure and the temptingly arranged

bouquets, cakes and kickshaws, over all of which floated the protecting banner of the Union. The fete was a decided success and augurs well of our people and their kind neighbors, who always come to the rescue in the expression of head and heart. An "off hand" was prepared by Mr. Holmes, of which the following is an extract. (not included) *Jan. 9, 1866*

On Christmas evening, the M. E. Sunday School gave a grand entertainment in Union Hall, consisting of recitations, declamations, dialogues, dramas, tableaux, with some fine singing by the children. The great feature of the entertainment was the appearance of Santa Claus down the chimney, with his bags of gifts for the members of the school, which ranged from a beautiful black walnut writing desk fully equipped, for the Superintendent Mr. Floyd, to the smaller presents for the "lambs of the flock", so that it is safe to say that all had a gift from St. Nick. On Thursday evening, Jan. 10, the S. School will repeat their Christmas exhibition. Should the weather be stormy, the entertainment will be given on the first fair evening.

Jan. 4, 1867

Nineteen more men were drafted in Salem on Monday by the Provost Marshall, to make up the deficiencies occurring through exemptions of those previously drawn. Alfred Cummings of Topsfield was drafted. *June 14, 1864*

Upcoming Events

Holiday Party
December 3rd, 3:00 PM

The Golden Days of Television
January 13th, 3:00 PM

Check out the Thanksgiving video on the Society website!

Kid's Corner

Why December 25th?



For the first three centuries of Christianity, Christmas wasn't in December or anywhere else on the calendar. If observed at all, the celebration of Christ's birth was usually lumped in with Epiphany (January 6), one of the church's earliest established feasts. Some church leaders even opposed the idea of a birth celebration as too pagan.

Sometime before 300, December 25 was chosen. December 25 was already related to two other festivals: natalis solis invicti (Roman "birth of the unconquered sun"), and the birthday of Mithras, the Iranian "Sun of Righteousness" whose worship was popular among Roman soldiers. Another sun celebration, the winter solstice, fell just a few days earlier. As pagans were already exalting deities with some parallels to the true deity, church leaders decided to commandeer the date and introduce a new festival.

Western Christians first celebrated Christmas on December 25 in 336, after Emperor Constantine had declared Christianity the empire's favored religion. Eastern churches, however, held on to January 6 as the date for Christ's birth and his baptism. Most easterners eventually adopted December 25, celebrating Christ's birth on the earlier date and his baptism on the latter, but the Armenian church celebrates his birth on January 6.

www.christianitytoday.com

Topsfield Town Library

Contributors Editor/Designer
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Local Lore

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12/07

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Essex County Co-operative

These days it seems like there is a Walmart, Costco, CVS or other chain store on every corner. The days of "mom and pop" stores, where the customers are known by their names rather than a number are disappearing quickly. It is hard for smaller stores to compete with the prices that the mega-stores are able to offer because of bulk buying.

But consider for a moment the Essex County Co-operative Farming Association where you get the best of both worlds. It was formed in 1917 as the US was entering WWI. A concern at that time was the potential of a food shortage and another was the struggle local farmers were having to stay afloat. They joined together in a non-profit association to find solutions; the major one being the capability to purchase larger quantities of farm supplies at a lower cost. They extended credit to those who needed it. It was primarily through the bulk purchases that they were able to aid the struggling farmers.

Over the last 90 years the Co-op has expanded to offer a diverse array of products such as grain, hay shavings, tools, sheds, propane, lawn & garden supplies and Woolrich clothing at the lowest possible price. The store offers a large quantity of items along with the charm and individual attention of a "mom and pop" store. Customers are greeted with a smile, a cup of coffee and lighthearted conversation.

Two of the past Co-op directors were also Society directors: Curtis Campbell and John Kimball, Jr.

If you are in need of any of the services this old time store has to offer, please drop in; you will be pleased with the result.

Excerpts from an autograph album belonging to Mary L. Gould of Topsfield, dated 1858.

*The time may come when you will say
The hand that wrote this sleeps in clay,
Oh! May we meet and upward fly,
On angels wings above the sky.*

*Your Friend,
Charles Hurbert*

*Our school days will soon be numbered with
the past, and the obscure vista of the future
lies before us. Then when the stern realities
of life thicken around you, pause for a
moment and truly lend a transient
recollection of your friend and schoolmate.*

D. Freeman

*Faith, Hope and Love, these are heavenly
blessings and I would crave them all for
thee.*

Your Cousin Nellie

Thanks to Ken and Sue Turner for replacing the lights in the Gould Barn with compact fluorescent R30 reflector light bulbs, which will last 10,000 hours, use 75% less energy and last 5 times longer.

The Holiday Party in December was a great success and drew a big crowd. Thanks to Ann Savage and her team for arranging the catering, and to Bill Flagg for providing the musical entertainment.

Happy New Year!

Contributors Norm Isler/Anne Barrett Editor/Designer Anne Barrett

Upcoming Events

The Golden Days of Television
January 13th, 3:00 PM

Prince Estabrook
February 24th, 3:00 PM

Kid's Corner 100 Years Ago...

Each year, millions of eyes from all over the world are focused on the sparkling Waterford Crystal Times Square New Year's Eve Ball. At 11:59 p.m., the Ball begins its descent as millions of voices unite to count down the final seconds of the year, and celebrate the beginning of a new year.

In 1904 the first-ever celebration of New Year's Eve in Times Square took place, commemorating the official opening of the new headquarters of The New York Times. The newspaper's owner, Alfred Ochs, had successfully lobbied the city to rename Longacre Square in honor of the famous publication.

The building was the focus of an unprecedented New Year's Eve celebration. An all-day street festival culminated in a fireworks display set off from the base of the tower, and at midnight the joyful sound of cheering, rattles and noisemakers from the over 200,000 attendees could be heard miles away.

Two years later, the city banned the fireworks - so Ochs arranged to have a large, illuminated seven-hundred-pound iron and wood ball lowered from the tower flagpole precisely at midnight to signal the end of 1907 and the beginning of 1908. timessquarenyc.org

